

**SECRET**

1. A portable data terminal for use in a portable data collection network including a backbone network and a plurality of access points coupled to the backbone network, the portable data terminal comprising:

a barcode reader for inputting barcode information;

a speaker; and

2. The portable data terminal of claim 1, wherein the voice circuit comprises a memory for storing voice data received via the RF transceiver.

4. The portable data terminal of claim 3, further comprising a display displaying indicia of the multiple voice messages, and means for permitting operator to select at least one of the multiple voice messages to be output through the speaker based on the displayed indicia.

6. The portable data terminal of claim 1, wherein a device coupled to backbone network initially stores the voice data intended for the portable terminal, and the portable data terminal periodically polls the device in order to prompt the device to transmit the voice data to the portable data terminal.







21. The portable data terminal of claim 20, wherein the display presents the indicia on the display as lines of text, with different lines representing different voice mail messages.

22. The portable data terminal of claim 21, where the input controls the position of a cursor shown on the display in relation to the lines of text.

23. A portable data collection network, comprising:  
a hardwired backbone network;  
a plurality of access points coupled to the backbone network;  
a plurality of portable data terminals, each of the plurality of portable data terminals comprising:

input means for inputting data;

an RF transceiver for communicating with at least one device coupled to the backbone network via at least one of the plurality of access points, the RF transceiver being configured to communicate information in packets in accordance with a carrier sense multiple access (CSMA) protocol;

a speaker; and

a control circuit, operatively coupled to the input means, the RF transceiver, and the speaker, for selectively enabling the RF transceiver to transmit data based on data input via the input means and to convert voice data received by the RF transceiver into a voice signal which is output through the speaker.

24. The portable data collection network of claim 23, wherein each of the plurality of portable data terminals further comprises a microphone operatively coupled to the control circuit, the control circuit selectively enabling the RF transceiver to transmit voice data based on an output of the microphone.

25. The portable data collection network of claim 24, wherein the control circuit of each portable data terminal is operative to effect conference calling between at least three different portable data terminals.